

This Old House

27
inspiring ideas
for your
laundry room
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easy paint makeovers

- Fresh kitchen color combos
- Simple decorative effects
- Spray-on problem-solvers

Be budget smart!
Low-cost counter options

Custom moldings
from basic tools

Turn attic space
into a master suite

**DIY
upgrades
with
impact**
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JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2011
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The eco-friendly York Affinity Series Furnaces.



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Go for it!
Create the look of a wood-grain finish with paint, glaze, and our handy how-to.

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Cover Photo credit: LARRY MANN
Styling: MICHAEL CAPTAIN



100% recycled

Laminate is making a colorful comeback. Our guide lays out what's new, where to use it, and how to treat it right.



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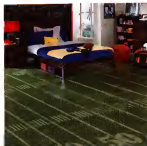
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Dream Home Laminate Floors

Dream Home Laminate Floors have all the beauty of natural wood but they resist staining, wear and fading as only a quality laminate can

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three easy ways to keep your home cozy this winter

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We just loved the creative, compassionate, and collegial responses we got to the November issue. One imaginative homeowner shared her painted stair runner, inspired by the colors in our cover design (see below). Another reader took the time to add her praises to our very first Hometown Heroes contest winner. And a longtime reader explains the order in which he prefers to paint a room.

Hometown Heroes winner

Public health nurses are so my lot of community heroes. They are masters of compassionate action, developing practical and effective solutions for needs they encounter. Sue Smith, featured as the November 2010 TOM Hometown Heroes award winner for her Papaya Connection charity, is a perfect example. Her daily bags for homeless children contain necessary items that are easy and affordable for charities and businesses to contribute, and I can just imagine the looks on the children's faces (and the faces of their grateful parents) when

they receive such a gift as they cope with life in a car, overcrowded shelter, or a motel. Kudos to TOM and Hyundai for sponsoring the Hometown Heroes award, and to Mrs. Smith for her inspiring retirement career.

—JULY BOONER, ATLANTA

Paint by number

I've been reading and enjoying TOM magazine for years and have used many of the articles and suggestions, for which I say thank you. I want to pass on a hint about interior painting that I received a few years ago. While the system in November's "Read This

Before You Pick Up a Paintbrush" (1) ceiling, (2) walls, (3) doors, (4) trim) is good, I have found that the following order works better and is generally faster: (1) ceiling, (2) trim, (3) walls, then (4) doors. The main reason is that it is much easier to cut in the walls to the trim than the trim to the walls; you're not looking at a 90-degree angle. It is also easier to clean up overalls all the walls than the trim, if the overalls on the walls is not too bad, the wall primer and paint will cover it. Additionally, I paint doors last so that you don't have to worry about bumping them every time you go in and out during the job.

—DANIELA DAVUTIAN, BALTIMORE

The editors reply: This order would work as long as you protect the trim from quarter when rolling the walls.

Correction

On page 96 of the November issue, the equation for figuring the number of 2-lb 2-foot by 6-inch rolls of a runner should have read: $\text{ceiling width} \div \text{length} = 4 \times 1.02 = \text{number}$.



reader project of the month

Great adaptation
INSPIRATION BY LHM

While looking for a color scheme to paint my basement stairs, I got most at the November TOM cover (top)—and there it was. Love the results and so does my family. Thanks for once again giving me inspiration.

how to reach us

The editors: This Old House magazine
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or at thisoldhouse.com
• include post box number, address and phone number. Published letters are edited for clarity and length.



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letter {from This Old House}

Some bright ideas just get better

It was four years ago, right after *This Old House* launched its new website, that we had an idea. (See that lightbulb? That's me having an idea.)

We had built forums into the site where readers could go talk to one another, ask questions, share inspiration, show off their accomplishments. And, man, did you just take advantage. In fact, there was so much lively conversation and so much wisdom offered at advice.thisoldhouse.com that we, as editors, thought, *Come, we need to share this community—and not just with the people online but also with the millions of folks who read the print version of This Old House*, too. So in the spring of 2005 we (and when I say we, I really mean you) did something no one had done before: produced the first 100 percent reader-created issue of a magazine.

It was great, and subsequent editions only got better. For the 2009 version, Tokon, the publishing trade organization, awarded us an Editors' Choice, sort of an Emmy for magazines.

Now we're set to do our fourth reader-created issue, and we're committed to making it the best one yet. And, like the previous three, we can't do it without your help, so... help!

Have you done a remodel like John and Tobi Coyne did last year? If so, we want you to submit it to us at thisoldhouse.com/yourTOH because we're giving away \$10,000 for the best ones sent in. Or maybe you're a tip-wisener like Richard Hill, who says his golf bag cart is carry-on but garden-pump sprayer. We love tips like that, which you can send to the same address. Or, and we want someone to work with TOH general contractor Tim Selva on a Home Center Project like Amy Palovina did when they built a garage workbench. If you've got an idea for a project, e-mail me at scott@thisoldhouse.com. This year we're even going to ask you to help pick the magazine's cover. Stay tuned for details on that.

We'll be updating you on the whole project in the next issue, but the best way to not miss an opportunity is to subscribe to our free e-mail newsletters, where we'll showcase lots of other goodies. If you don't already get them, go to thisoldhouse.com/newsletters to sign up.

And in the meantime, enjoy this month's TOH. I think it's a pretty good issue—but I'm betting that if we work together, we can do even better.

Scott O'Malley
SCOTT O'MALLEY, EDITOR
scott@thisoldhouse.com



THREE THINGS I LEARNED FROM THIS ISSUE >

1. **How a comb** can make your walls look like wood planks. [p. 38]
2. **How a 12-volt drill/driver battery** can help warm up your windows. [p. 18]
3. **How you can iron out** your wood furniture's effects of depuration. [p. 12]

Wake Forest is using Toyota's injury simulation software to find ways to make football helmets even safer.

- Gloria O, Charleston, S.C.



checklist { January/February 2011 }

EASY WAY TO
IMPROVE YOUR
HOME RIGHT NOW

Order seeds early
January is National Mail Order Gardening Month—and for good reason. Though planting time is still a few months away, some garden favorites, like heirloom tomatoes and purple carrots, are grown in limited supplies and can sell out fast. If you have your heart set on a certain variety, order the seeds now so that they'll be at your doorstep in time for the thaw.



Update your decor—on the cheap

Here a pile of inspirational magazine pages you've been waiting to make a reality? January and February are the best times to nab furniture of serious discounts—up to 60 percent off in some cases—as stores hold clearance sales to make room for new spring inventory.

Update your decor—on the cheap

TOH
TIP

Steam out small dents in wood furniture
Just because your favorite table has had a few rough encounters with guests doesn't mean it's beyond repair. To fix dents in finished wood, pour in the steam with a needle, cover with a sock and a rag, and press with a mallet for a few seconds. Repeat the steam on the wood, filling the depressions.

Reuse fireplace ashes

Cleaning out your hearth is a messy business, but if you burn wood logs, you can make the chore doubly worthwhile by scattering the cooled ashes on your compost pile. Make sure to sprinkle a small scoop on each new 2- to 3-inch layer of compost; the ashes will add potassium, lime, and other nutrients but can also raise your soil's pH, so don't overdo it.

Revive a coir doormat

If you've got a fiber mat that's starting to show wear and tear from this winter's boot traffic, bring it back to life with water and a broom. First, scrape off any caked-on mud with a spoon or knife, then hang the rag outside and beat it with the broom's handle. Use a stiff bristle brush and water to clean any remaining dirt particles, and lay flat to dry. Keep up the maintenance and your mat can last up to six years.



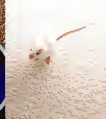
What's on your checklist?

We'll be selling and modeling the new-jolt outfits to our home's online with mid-term board and casual spray-fans—it's only going to cost about \$300.
—Sherry Turner Jones, Lafayette, Ind.
E-mail us your ideas at checklist@thefixhouse.com

INSULATION

FOUNDATIONS

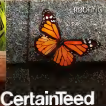
CEILING



BUILDING FOR LIFE



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WE'RE GOING HOLLYWOOD!

Tune in as *This Old House* takes the show on the road to Los Angeles where we'll work with a talented team of locals to give a Spanish Colonial Revival a star quality makeover.

See the transformation in 10 new episodes debuting this winter on PBS.



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home solutions

Edited by Jessica Dods-D-Fisher

inside

CLEAN-AIR PLANTS

FURNACE-FILTER GUIDE

MORE



4 SMART IDEA

Tin-tile fireplace surround

While looking for a way to add personality to their new bottom fireplace, TOH readers Steve and Sandy Miller had this flash of genius: Why not use the same unique tin tiles that adorned their kitchen backsplash for the surround? The Grass Valley, California, couple loved how the ornate, small-scale pattern highlighted the narrow space. So they cut the tiles to fit from larger panels, then covered the surround with cement backer board and affixed the tin with a heat-resistant construction adhesive. In total, the project took only a few days—but the result will look cozy all winter.

When covering a narrow area, choose small-scale tiles with a multi-repeat so that you cannot tell them without raising the eyebrows. The \$100 for a 2-by-4-foot sheet: diydwelling.com





+ UPDATES

From closet to office

When you're tight on space, a home office may seem like luxury, but coming one out from a seldom-used closet is easier than you think. Just take out the existing rod and follow these tips: 1. Set shelves at least 1 foot apart and mount with standards, which cost just up to 70 cents per foot. Try Elfin's Driftwood and Platinum Office Closet, \$230, carthensstore.com. 2. Avoid clutter by storing stationery and odds-and-ends in labeled, stackable boxes. 3. If your drawers don't fit, take advantage of vertical real estate by sawing thin sheets of wood to their back sides for posting notes and bits. 4. Set your to-do lists in sight with a small, movable magnetic or dry-erase board. To make one of a kind version, prime and coat pieces of wood with blackboard paint. 5. Pick a narrow desk with slim drawers directly beneath the top for space-saving, a easy-to-access storage. 6. Instead of installing a ceiling light, opt for a task lamp with an adjustable arm. Learn how to add an electrical outlet at thisoldhouse.com/series. —MAYALEE RODRIGUEZ

+ HEALTHY HOME

Clean-air plants

Renovating projects like installing new carpet and painting your walls can release chemicals that pollute indoor air. Luckily, some houseplants moonlight as efficient purifiers. Just put a few plants anywhere for a few months, you'll have a safe and environmentally sound On-Bid bioconversion. Here, three smart options:



English Ivy

This hearty climbing vine thrives in small spaces. It also fares well in rooms with little sun.

HOW IT HELPS: Its dense foliage excels at absorbing formaldehyde, the most prevalent indoor pollutant, which shows up in wood floorboard seams and synthetic carpet dyes.



Peace Lily

Among the top air purifiers that flower, peace lilies adapt well to low light and need weekly watering.

HOW IT HELPS: This year-round bloomer rids the air of the VOC benzene, a carcinogen found in paints, furniture wax, and polishes. It also sucks up nicotine, which is emitted by electronic cigarettes, and certain cleaners.



Lady Palm

A simple to grow tropical species, lady palms tolerate overcast, fan-like leaves.

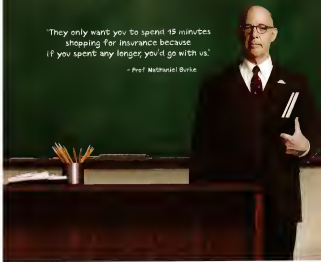
HOW IT HELPS: Keep an eye on this plant to help maintain air quality of the respiratory system and a major ingredient in some cleaners, turpentine, and dyes.

—CHRISTINE BURNELL

PHOTOS: GETTY IMAGES; ILLUSTRATION: JEFFREY M. HARRIS; STYLING: JESSICA HARRIS; FARMERS: JEFFREY M. HARRIS

"They only want you to spend 15 minutes shopping for insurance because if you spent any longer, you'd go with us."

—Prof. Nathaniel Burke



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YARD CONTROL

Tree service

Whether the cause is a basement, basement, or tree, a fallen tree on your property can cause a big headache. Here's how to deal.

Assess the damage. Make sure the tree didn't take down any power lines. If it did, call your utility company immediately. If it didn't, see if any power lines are hanging from the tree. If so, call the power company to have them removed. If the tree is on your roof or in your yard, take photos of the damage for when you file a claim.

Call your insurance rep. If the tree fell on your house or another insured structure on your property, file a claim, and you'll be covered. The next step is if the tree is from a neighbor's yard—unless that tree is dead or rotting due to poor maintenance. In that case, your neighbor might hold the neighbor responsible. Bring you from looking out a deductible.

Remove it. Most policies cover up to about \$500 for removal, though it can cost you double that. Call a licensed arborist or tree service to remove the tree. If the tree is small, unrooted, and lying flat, you may be able to cut it yourself with a chainsaw. But if you have doubts, call a pro. —NATHAN COOK



ENERGY SAVERS

Furnace filter guide

Heat your home with care. Here's how to save some money and keep your system working efficiently—by regularly replacing the filter. To find the best one for your home, take a look at this chart and pay special attention to the minimum efficiency reporting value (MERV) the higher the number the better. —SARAH LUGA



Type	Material	MERV rating	Cost	Durability	Bottom line
Panel	Fiberglass or polyester in a cardboard frame	Up to 3	\$1-\$3	Should be replaced every 30 days	Though inexpensive, these filters allow air to pass through more easily than pleated filters.
Washable	Polyester in an aluminum or rigid polyethylene frame	5 to 7	\$10-\$15	It should be replaced monthly but will last up to four years.	Convenient and less wasteful than buying new, but generally not as good as pleated options.
Pleated	Folded cotton polyester in a cardboard frame	5 to 8	\$3-\$7	Should be replaced every 90 days.	A larger surface area lets it trap more particles, making it a good choice for performance and value.
Electrostatic	Electrostatically charged polypropylene	7 to 12	\$5-\$25	Should be replaced at least every 90 days.	Your best bet. The charged fibers capture everything that passes through—usually good for allergy sufferers.

OUTDOOR GEAR

The coziest coat

Forget down and wool. If you really want to chase off the chill, opt for battery power. Running off the same 12-volt lithium battery as Milwaukee's drill driver, this winter-resistant jacket can keep the wearer toasty for up to 6 hours. Simply plug the battery into its designated pocket, so your down's warmth level, and let the heat-conducting carbon-fiber panels work their magic. M12 Cordless Heated Jacket Kit, \$169, milwaukee.com —GJ



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INSTANT MAKEOVERS

Solve it with spray paint

Stainless surfaces and large mirrors are handy, sure, but if your house needs a face lift, you need specialty spray paints. Able to mimic the look of everything from stainless steel to stone/glee—and/or insulated for all types of surfaces (including painted and metal—those high-impact, long-lasting finishes will be easy fix for a slew of household objects. And at around \$5 to \$10 a can, you can afford to make over/overhaul up outdoors from you over. Need proof? Check out these examples. —J.O.F.



Scratched, weathered outdoor sconce

The distressed pediment through a window's frame and its not paint jobs—and a follow-up. Stained, pink stainless steel and even a lot rusty, dramatically needed a new finish. To make the garage, we used Rust-Oleum's Hammered Fresh or Verde Green (\$6, available in can or spray), which gives the appearance of a hand-painted finish with a vintage patina. **Tip:** Apply at least three coats to get the full effect of a metallic finish.



Window that leaves you exposed

Installed in a bathroom, this window revealed too much—until we sprayed the panes with a tinted glass color (\$9.99 each, Krylon.com) for staining. Available in red, yellow, and blue, the translucent formula lets in light while shading outside from prying eyes. **Tip:** Layer splatters of color over one another to give your window the look of stained glass.



Cheap-looking plastic urn

At least \$6, this planter left our wallets happy. Is it the (stainless) steel outside a room (found) when placed next to a bright fire? Well, it is. It's a realistic case of a subtly shiny, somewhat shiny with American Accents Stone spray in Platinum (\$9.99, available in can or spray). It's a realistic look that looks like the real thing. **Tip:** The paint is meant only for indoor use. To make it suitable for the outdoors, let it dry, then coat the entire piece with a moisture-resistant clear topcoat.

Low-budget toaster

While it worked perfectly, this plastic appliance looked like the stainless steel in a kitchen (not a country store). To bring it into the modern age, we coated it with Thermi's Liquid Stainless Steel (\$5) liquid stainless steel, which offers a brushed metal look and can withstand temperatures of up to 200 degrees. **Tip:** Scuff glossy surfaces, such as plastic or brass, with fine-grit sandpaper before painting to make sure the metal-based formula adheres well.



Mismatched candlesticks

Thanks to their varying heights and shapes and every different shade, these mismatched brass candlesticks looked better suited to a farmhouse table than a dining table. All it took was a couple of coats of Velour Liqueur (\$6, Glens at Home). Lower the color (to turn them into a cohesive collection) with a smooth coating. **Tip:** To ensure vibrant, even pigment, apply a primer to metal objects before painting.

But that's not all, folks...

Here are more paint-and-spray projects that prove you can make huge changes with just one little can.

- **Stained wood furniture** Reverse the look of finished tables, chairs, and more with a translucent (acrylic-based) spray stain. One to try: Design Master's Horse Decor Stain (\$17, available in can), which comes in various wood finishes and creates a scratch- and water-resistant topcoat.
- **Slippery stairs** Add extra traction to dangerously slick porch, stool, or ladder steps by spraying them with a durable, textured finish made from epoxy resin, like Krylon's Slip-Shod Coating (\$6, topcoats.com).
- **Hard ware that's lost its finish** If so much have traffic has doorknobs, cabinet pulls, and switch plates looking worn, coat them with a rich metallic paint. Velour's Metal (\$17, do-it-best.com) dries completely in 1 hour and comes in shades from pewter to copper.
- **Chipped, flaking radiator** For many homeowners, displaying the heavy iron or steel pipes of a radiator is a necessary evil. To warm up the look, paint the metal with a rust-resistant, high-temp enamel. For colors from black and copper to more traditional silver and white, try Rust-Oleum's Tough Coat or High Heat Ultra (\$9-\$12, kalspaint.com).
- **Faded curtains, tablecloth, and upholstery** Refresh it or not, you can even spray-paint fabric. So instead of looking out extra cash to replace washed-out bedlinens or upholstered furniture, try coating them with a product such as Simply Spray's Upholstery paint (\$13, amazon.com). Just test in an inconspicuous area first to ensure you get the look you want.

we want solutions!

Let us know what you're struggling with, and we'll post the right solution for you. Send your email address, first name, and phone number to: we_want_solutions@thefixmag.com

NEW from **This Old House**



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What's Inside:

- Over 200 pages of bathroom makeovers, including before-and-after photos
- Layouts designed to maximize comfort and functionality
- All the right details to create the look you want
- Inspiring photo galleries of a variety of finished rooms
- Tips and advice from This Old House experts

15 Great Ideas That Mom, Dad, and Kids Can Build and Enjoy!

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- Valuable building skills and safety tips
- Great pro advice from This Old House
- Special access to templates and step-by-step videos on thisoldhouse.com
- Bonus pages with fun ideas and helpful tips

This Old House
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before + after:
kitchen

Old-world style, gracious new fit

A gut redo yields a classic kitchen—no island here—with more than a few surprises. BY JILL CONNORS • Photography by JAMES WOODLAF



Leveled glass cabinet fronts reinforce the style of the 20th-century house.

Redoing a kitchen in a well-preserved 1920s house requires equal regard for the past and the present, and that was clearly the case for Jack and Shelley Tremouth, owners of an 82-year-old stone house in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. They longed for a high-performance cooking space with the latest built-in appliances but also craved a strong period style. "Character was so important to us," says Shelley. They looked off the process by asking designer Tom Hurd to make a red Aga range the centerpiece of the kitchen while hiding the fridge. "We could have taken out a wall or put in an island, but we didn't want to forgo the flavor of the house," says Shelley. Not that function wasn't key too. Back-to-back under-mounted in a custom cherry handle—offer prep and cleanup convenience, and a double-wide stack of stainless-steel appliances is tucked inside the pantry. To satisfy the couple's desire for order, two symmetrical banks of so-the-cutting cabinets are crowned, glazed, beamed, and shined right down to the height of the drawers. As for where Hurd hid two fridges, near the juke



before The cabinet installation and the pantry were all work, including the Aga range. After the new work, the room opened up to the pantry with elegant areas for the working, food prep, and washing up. Design: Agn



A pair of column fridges lines the cupboard that sits on top of the compressor base.



before

The pantry held the fridge that was nearly useless off from the kitchen.



after

Hidden column fridges look in a cherry cabinet style built in. A cherry photo with two sinks made pass through opened up a pantry wall.

1. Eliminated a door and moved the entry 18 inches to align it with the pantry opening.

5. Built in a breakfast nook sheltered by a curved ceiling and framed by an archway.



2. Opened up the pantry by removing a door with an arched opening.

3. Occupied appliances in the pantry, including a dishwasher, oven, coffee station, wine fridge, and built-in microwave.

4. Cut out a pass-through and surrounded it with custom-built that holds built-in breakfast nook for food prep and use for cleanup.

the key details

1. An archway and a pass-through framing a cherry hatch now connect the cooking area and pantry, which holds a bank of stainless steel built-in appliances. Dishwasher, coffee maker, oven, and wine refrigerator. Photo credit: White Lodge Kitchen



2. Back-to-back sinks and black granite counters are framed by an opening in the hatch and share a swirling, handy-to-use faucet. Photo credit: White Lodge Kitchen



homeowner tip
SILVIA L. LUTHE, VICTORIA, B.C. CANADA
"We made our table with an industrial cast-iron base and a wood top painted to match the cabinets."



more ideas

► Find built-in style kitchen appliances and built-in appliances.



3. Crackle-glazed tile and a curved ceiling shelter the breakfast nook. Photo credit: White Lodge Kitchen

4. The breakfast nook has built-in breakfast and a curved ceiling. Photo credit: White Lodge Kitchen

A 1930s bath revamp

A few more square feet and a new alcove add charm and breathing space to this Deco-inspired bath. **by MAGGIE RODRIGUEZ • Photographs by VONDELLE T. WISNICK**

Staying true to a home's character doesn't mean forsaking modern living: your knees against the bathtub. Annette McCarthy and Mark LeDuc, both dancers, were drawn to their 1934 Tudor Revival in Chappaqua, New York, for its vintage look. But after a few years of living with its original black-and-white L-shaped bath (the lone full bath upstairs—welcome they share with their three children), the couple craved a little leg room. Since they were renovating the adjacent bedroom anyway, they decided to gut the cramped bath and enlarge it by annexing closet space. That allowed a nice layout, with the tub in a tile-raised alcove. The couple chose vintage-style fixtures and a classic black-and-white tile scheme, then finished the walls with a warm red that glows when the sun shines through a leaded window. "The door was hard to live with," says Annette. "This now it's the perfect bath for us, with plenty of room to move in."



↑
Thermostatic heater affords a handy spot for bath supplies while not taking the footprint at times of the shower.

before
The bath was so small the tub was awkwardly on top of the toilet. **ADDED** Wider and brighter. Remnant tile vintage style tile, chrome fittings, and a window above. **DOOR** Double-pane. **REPLACED** Water a Goro's Mayo



(before)

• **A built-in wall niche,** added to the room, offers space-saving storage. The mirror shelves were hung in it, making the ledge over the tub. With tile. Color.



• **Deco-style accents** with tiled backsplashes and stacked glass shelves add a graphic vintage appeal. **Source:** Restoration



homeowner tip

MAGGIE RODRIGUEZ
CHAPPAQUA, NY
"Dress up cheap white tile with black bathroom caps and then black trim pieces. To get the look of heavier vintage tile, thicken the mud bed."

• **The console sink,** inspired by James Van Der Zee and Harry S. Reinhardt, the Art Deco look with heavy travel lens adding a shot of stream. Sink, Forster. Faucet, Kingston Brass

before

The tub, toilet, and sink were jammed along and within 60 square feet, even the result of the space was too tight to be useful.



after

1. **Added 12 square feet** allowed for reimagining the fixtures, making the bath feel brighter and more spacious.

1. **Added 3 feet** to the width of the room by taking space from the bedroom closet.

2. **Aired out** the toilet and sink in the wall space from where they were, leaving the tub in the windowed wall.



3. **Designed an arched alcove** for the tub and swapped in a leaded glass window. The arch alcove mirrors found elsewhere in the house.

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shopping

Architectural mirrors

A handsome group of looking glasses inspired by classic house parts

by DANIELLE KENDALL • Photographs by WENDY T. WEBER

Bygone eras have inspired a new wave of architectural mirrors. These looking glasses are inspired by classic house parts, such as window frames, shutters, and doors. The mirrors are made of wood, metal, or glass and are designed to look like a piece of furniture. They are available in a variety of sizes and styles, from small and simple to large and ornate. The mirrors are perfect for adding a touch of classic style to any room.



get the question
QUANTITY

Frame: MDF with red
wooden and a full round
white lead lead

Size: 30" W x 30" H

Price: \$100.00
The mirror is made of
upgraded 1/2" thick solid
wood. It is a 30" x 30" mirror.
\$100.00



get the question
QUANTITY

Frame: White lacquered MDF
Size: 31.7" W x 42.7" H

Price: \$100.00
This mirror is made of
upgraded 1/2" thick solid
wood. It is a 31.7" x 42.7" mirror.
\$100.00

Price: \$100.00

Price: \$100.00

Price: \$100.00

Price: \$100.00

Price: \$100.00

Price: \$100.00

Price: \$100.00

Price: \$100.00

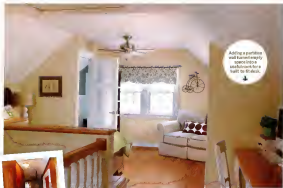
Price: \$100.00

Price: \$100.00

A bright attic suite for \$2,620

A dingy, makeshift bedroom and bath becomes a cheery retreat with custom built-ins—for less than the cost of a new set of furniture

By NATALIE DRENNEN • Photos by the top 100 DIY CREATORS



Adding a partition wall turned empty space into a walk-in closet for a built-in bench.



Before: Dark wood paneling, too many closets, and worn carpeting made the small space feel dated and claustrophobic. Creamy neutral paint, crown and pale oak floors create a light and bright palette that makes the space feel more open.

In a small house, every bit of space needs to work hard, as homeowners Samantha and Bryan Langdon's soon-to-be bedroom on the first floor for guests, they see fine sights on the second-floor finished attic for their master suite. While a bath was already in place and in decent shape, the carpet suggested there'd been a bad job there too, the space was far from useful. Dark wood paneling and space-hogging closets had turned it into a dim, depressing room. "The bath was 20 inches wide. I don't know how anyone could have gotten a mattress up those," says Bryan.

Working nights and weekends for about two months while sleeping in a guest bedroom downstairs, the couple gained much of the space, tore out closet walls, and added insulation throughout. Raising the ceiling about a foot in the bedroom half of the area allowed for a ceiling fan, and adding a partition wall created a walk-in closet. With both windows unobstructed, natural light now flows from one end to the other, enhanced by pale neutral walls and fabric. "We wanted to make it as light and bright as possible," says Bryan. With the transformation complete, the couple love waking up in their new, sun-filled master suite. ■

PHOTOGRAPH BY JESSICA BROWN FOR THE TOP 100 DIY CREATORS



• The built-in bench provides extra storage for linens. The painted base blends in with the walls, while the built-in headboard creates a cozy nook for reading.

calling all penny-pinchers!

See how to make the most of your space with our guide to the top 100 DIY creators. Visit www.budgetfriendly.net for more.

• A half-wall behind the bedroom bench, plus a built-in headboard, replaced full walls that used to divide the closets. New and old light fixtures allow lots of sunlight to enter the space.



• The updated bath was broken out with paint and new, space-saving vanity. A custom-made built-in by the homeowner replaced the toilet. The translucent, tinted glass panels bring light into the small, walk-in shower while still maintaining privacy.



homeowner tip

BRYAN LANGDON, WATERBURY, CONN.
"Reuse materials whenever possible. I used 2x4s salvaged from the walls I demolished to frame the bench and covered it with leftover drywall."

the project tally:

Get the space of a hallway	\$0
drywall and carpet	
Add insulation and paint half of the dropped ceiling	\$200
Updated the electrical and installed ceiling fixtures	\$325
Put up new drywall and added built-in window and doorway trim	\$400
Replaced one shower wall with a built-in tub	\$365
Laid new oak flooring	\$500
Built a glass, panel-out door for the built-in new doorway	\$150
Installed a new bath vanity	\$300
Made a new topped half wall and built-in storage bench	\$250
Broke out walls with 2 pipes of plaster and 5 pipes of pipes	\$250
total	\$2,620

Vintage-style bathroom

Carefully chosen fixtures and accessories give this soothing space turns-of-the-century appeal. **By JESSICA DODDLE-STEIGER • Photograph by TIM TAYLOR**

There's nothing like an oversized tub to turn a bathroom into a spa-like retreat. In this space, a black-painted wooden on a platform of oak planks literally takes center stage. And it's no wonder: The tub's rolled rim and claw feet set the tone for the entire room, lending its classic, cozy look. Nickel accents, a Louis XVI-style chair, and a pedestal sink add to the vintage charm, as do eclectic accessories, including antique apothecary jars and illustrations that suggest a Victorian-era fascination with the natural sciences. Storage comes courtesy of simple open shelves made from the same marble as the backsplash. Vintage and groovy walls, painted a dusky turquoise, complete the story. Read on to learn how to create a similar space in your home.

pedestal sink
A white basin of Kohler's stately Memoirs line offers plenty of space for washing up. \$385, vintagefinds.com

backsplash tiles

A marble mosaic behind the sink looks luxurious. But it doesn't have to cost a fortune. Instead of splurging on a slab, opt for stone 6-inch squares from M.I. International. \$8.49 per square foot. marbleintl.com

apothecary bottles

Glass-bottle apothecaries like liquid soap and rubbing alcohol, as well as bathroom glass jars. From 35 cents at select HomeGoods stores. Pharmacy labels from The Vintage Apothecary. \$5 for 40 supplies or less.



globe sconce
Brighten your morning routine by switching to this Art Deco-inspired fixture with nickel-plated metal shade. \$130, rejuvenation.com

get
this look



chrome-plated caddy

Keep rinsing brushes close at hand in antique brass style—with this tub-ready. \$25, rejuvenation.com



framed art
Enliven black walls with a grouping of Victorian-style fauna prints. \$40 each, vintagefinds.com



claw-foot tub

With its gently curving shape, this 40-inch cast-iron soaker encourages hours of lounging. To pair it black, as shown, use steel-based enamel. \$1,050, ajpatenthardware.com



wall paint

Soft turquoise sets a soothing tone. Vintage's take on Kilburn's End is named in honor of the color. \$25 per gallon at Lowe's stores.

Louis XVI chair

Line an apothecary and a bathroom with this seat. The seat has the warmth of an antique. \$275, vintagefinds.com



nickel-plated brackets
Instead of a medicine cabinet, opt for open shelves made from inexpensive marble tiles available in antique white or black. \$22 for two, etsy.com

Faux wood grain, fast and easy

Acrylic glaze, latex paint, and simple tools let you put your own twist on a classic finish

BY DEBRA GOODMAN • Photograph by WENDY WINTER

Traditional faux staining demands painstaking craftsmanship. But if you don't care to master the 19th-century art of hand-painting delicate veins and knots, there's an easier way. All you need are two colors of latex paint, some acrylic glaze, and a wood-graining rocker, which can cut sharply bent grain into wet paint. Add a paint comb, which lets you vary the pattern by creating some loose-free "planks," and a foam roller and paint tray. Three hours later you'll have a striking pattern with visible centers, thanks to ridges left behind in the glaze. "It's great for painted pieces that would be made out of wood, like doors and benches, but also on a wall," says interior designer Ingrid Lenz, who transformed the built-in shown. To give the look even more not-to-serious character, she reversed the grain, making a pattern of glossy white stop over black. It's a quick process to master, and glaze dries slowly, so you can rework any wobbly planks. Still not sure you can drag a rocker as a straight line? Practice on a piece of posterboard first. Read on for the how-to.

For tight areas, like the back of this built-in, grab a piece of MDF and a roller.

essential tools

A three-piece wood-graining set (the bit.ly/woodgrain set) is a way and allows you to vary the pattern of your "planks."



1 Prep the surface. If using an MDF panel, prime both sides to prevent warping. Apply two coats of latex finish paint (here, Benjamin Moore's Brown Horse). Once it dries, mix equal parts clear acrylic glaze and white latex paint. Apply with a roller, glazing and faux-graining a portion at a time.



2 Get in the edges. Holding a paint comb at a 45-degree angle to the surface, cut in along the top of the panel. Pull the tool through the glaze in one uninterrupted motion to create veins running the panel's width. Now you don't have to worry about lining up the graining rocker with the edge of your first pass.



3 Create the "planks." Overlapping the grain, set the heel of the rocker on the panel's far edge. In one smooth motion, pull the tool toward you, dragging the full pattern as the curved rocker through the glaze. If it doesn't look right, replace that area and try again. To run the grain in the opposite direction, flip the handle.



4 Vary the grain. Every so often, come along the edge of a section you've just completed to vary the look of your planks. Mix up how you use the rocker and comb—twirling the tool to introduce some waves in the grain for a more natural pattern, for instance. ■

what's your paint idea?

For a related, clever paint project, visit bit.ly/woodgrain to see more projects and inspiration. Visit bit.ly/woodgrain to see more projects and inspiration.

Oriental rugs

Their rich colors and patterns flatter wood floors and go with any decor. Here's how two can share a design but differ in cut, color, and price. BY ORCHARD HOUSE

Rugs in handwoven elegance made their way around the globe in the 1600s, when the British and Dutch were prowling Persia, Turkey, India, and beyond, and were so proud in 18th-century America that they were kept off the floor and draped over tables. Fast-forward some 300 years: Today, however, handmade rugs are again in demand—and benefiting from a revival of the craft in traditional rug-making areas, where the apt of skilled labor is low. Consider these two—both made in India for a longtime exporter—which are designs inspired by antique rugs from central Persia (see box). The high-end version has more than a million handmade knots, while the other is tailored to match its low-tech, for help at handloom taking care. For more of the back story, read on.

IS IT FOR YOU?
If you want a handwoven, vintage-looking rug that could become an heirloom.

look

The pattern is loaded with detail, and colors, which prove ideal changes with the light.

how it's made

Guidelines: In most of the handwoven world, workers hand-knot every knot in 20 colors are not too far from the truth. The rug is woven accordingly to the colors, and the fringe is braided in a vintage silver-gray. While knot count is not always a mark of quality, this rug is 300 knots per square inch, which is better density resolution.

feel

In being out the fine pattern, the pile is almost short, making the rug less plush.

High-End

Lavar Collection

INDIAN HAND-WEAVE (HAND-KNOTTED)

Size: 6' x 9' (ft) Weight: 40 pounds

+\$2,600



Budget

Persian Legend Collection

INDIAN HAND-WEAVE (HAND-KNOTTED)

Size: 6' x 9' (ft) Weight: 30 pounds

\$800+



IS IT FOR YOU?
If you want an updated palette, not too rich, and don't mind a rug with a shorter pile.

look

While the pattern is nearly identical, this rug looks softer, due in part to fewer colors.

how it's made

Using 100% wool, workers hand-knot every knot in 20 colors are not too far from the truth. The rug is woven accordingly to the colors, and the fringe is braided in a vintage silver-gray. While knot count is not always a mark of quality, this rug is 300 knots per square inch, which is better density resolution.

feel

The pile is relatively thick, for a lush touch, which helps account for the rug's weight.



pro advice

WALTER B. DUNN
PROFESSOR OF ART
HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF
MICHIGAN
ANN ARBOR

"Before you buy, read up. *Oriental Carpets* by Jon Thompson is the best book to start with. Then ask around to find a reputable dealer who can advise you."

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Plaster perfect

With an artist's eye and a tradesman's work ethic, Ken Wildes turns ordinary ceilings into architectural treasures. BY KATHY HOSKIN

Cloning up at a Ken Wildes ceiling accounted for his signature swirly, drippy, drippy designs, it's hard to believe he started out as a daywall jockey, slapping compound into joints. That all changed in 1992, when, on a case of Rosolift, a Gilded Age mansion in Newport, Rhode Island, he became transfixed by its ornate plaster ceilings and his life-changing epiphany: Wildes always had deep artistic tendencies—"In high school, I'd play with clay like you wouldn't believe"—and as that ceiling he saw a way to marry art with his trade. Back home in Falmouth, Massachusetts, he began single-mindedly teaching himself how to make such ceilings at his own

Wildes was a fast learner. His plaster medallions, cornices, and friezes—which he embellished with handmade apple blossoms, figs, and acorns—soon won favor among his clients. By 2000, his work had won the Newport Historical Society, which had him to replicate a ceiling in... Rosolift mansion.

These days, Wildes, 61, crisscrosses the country at the company of his three sons, spending long days atop scaffolding, either restoring old plaster ceilings or creating new ones for institutions and deep-pocketed homeowners looking to top out a room with some classic bling. A single job can contain up to 30,000 elements and take up to six months to complete. It's not cheap, but, as Wildes says, with obvious pride, "When you have one of my ceilings, it's unique, an original work of art. No one can ever duplicate it." ■

Ken Wildes

MASTER PLASTER
JOSHUA@COO
PLASTERART.COM



Wildes makes the delicate details for his elaborate ceilings either by casting plaster in silicone molds (right) or, in some cases, hand-sculpting each leaf and flower out of clay. The painstaking process can take months to complete.



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build it
or buy it

Wood mantel

Put together a classic surround from stock lumber and moldings, or choose from a variety of premade options. *By Anna McCormack*

The fireplace has come a long way. Once merely a means of cooking up grub and keeping rooms warm, it's now a constant focal point that symbolizes the cozy comfort of winter—and a wood mantel gives the hearth even more warmth. Though there's no shortage of premade mantels on the market, we're editors at heart, so we set out to build one from off-the-shelf lumber.

We opted for a traditional-looking design that goes with many types of decor. Made of 1½-inch router plywood, our mantel is layered with elegant pilasters that are wrapped with stock moldings and banded, and topped with a crown and shelf.

As with any fireplace project, safety is paramount. National codes require at least 6 inches of clearance all around the firebox and an additional 1 inch for every 1½ inches of material protruding from the surface; local codes might be stricter. So before you design or pick your product accordingly, a codebook or online can help you determine whether a mantel is the right size and scale for your space. And make sure to secure it properly to the fireplace—find complete instructions at doitbest.com/safety. Install one soon, and you'll love how it frames your favorite gathering spot.

build this mantel

Like this one? Here's how to build it out of stock lumber. You'll need a router and a variety of moldings. doitbest.com/safety



build it

Size the mantel to fit your fireplace, and choose moldings and trim that mimic nearby profiles.

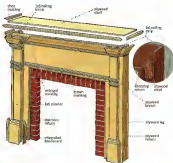
Cost: \$175 to \$600
Time: 10 hours
Difficulty: Moderate.
Measuring and installing the trim properly takes time and precision.

1. Cut the pieces. Cut the shelf, breast, legs, returns, and molding strips to size.

2. Assemble the mantel. Attach the legs to the breast by screwing plywood cleats across their back faces. Screw molding strips to the back of the assembly, ¼ inch from each outer edge. Set returns against the strips, flush with the outer edges. Secure them with screws.

3. Cut and add the trim. Nail centered pilasters to each leg. Install a molding block on each pilaster flush with its top edge. Nailer and nail trim to the bottom, add crown molding at the top, then add astragal molding below the crown molding and along the bottom of the breast. Nailer and nail the doorstop to the mantel's interior edges to finish the returns to the surround.

4. Attach the shelf. Trim the shelf by scribing and nailing shoe molding to its edges. Nail through the top of the shelf into the mantel. Fill all fastener holes before sanding and finishing the entire piece. ■



buy it

Choose from MDF or solid wood, with a variety of finish options

\$323+

Basic

Made of sturdy medium-density fiberboard (MDF), this simple mantel comes preprimed and ready for your painter's touch. franklinandmiller.com



\$679+

Mid-range

You can stain or simply varnish this cherry hardwood and veneer mantel, which features both paneling and fluted details. brookline.com



\$1,036+

Luxury

This built-up option comes in a variety of wood species, and you can pay extra for a factory-applied paint or stain, or opt for a custom finish. doitbest.com



that were discreetly tucked away behind houses), homeowners and architects have found a big challenge: how to make new garages don't overshadow the houses themselves. For the TOPTV house, the solution will be a new "hut"—namely, a gabled roof that will arch the new topping the new, bumped-out driveway. Unifying the entire facade will make the garage seem much less dominant. And a pergola, shown in the photo illustration below, will connect the garage to the entry structure, providing an extra dose of visual appeal.

The Shermans also considered adding new carriage-style garage doors, but they proved too pricey for their budget. Instead, they'll give the existing doors a fresh coat of paint and add eye-catching oil-rubbed bronze accents to give each one.

Even in today's hot housing market, it's smart to tackle exterior projects like this one to help protect a home's value. If you're looking for ideas on how to make your garage more of a looker, check out the examples we've pulled together here.

This photo illustration shows the garage for the TOPTV project as it will look when completed, with its new roof, repainted doors, and a handsome pergola over the driveway leading to the entry.



garage door ideas

New doors give any garage a dramatic look. Pick the up-to-date photos at different door styles, including carriage-style doors, at BarnDoor.com/doorstyles

Three ways to upgrade a garage

Don't let that spot become an afterthought. The remodels shown here reflect enhancements big and small made to the common but often overlooked structure.



1 replace the doors

Let's face it: Many garage doors suffer from serious image problems. In this case, a pair of whitewashed painted doors (left) made the entire garage structure of this house look more like a boarded-up building than part of a home's overall design. The simple addition of light, horizontal beam-style doors (middle) gave this two-car garage much more visual appeal. The elegant light windows also took up the remodeling of the facade, creating a new focal point.



2 give it a face-lift

If you're planning to paint your house or add new siding, try to tackle your garage improvements at the same time—it's usually cheaper to do the work all at once than to make upgrades piecemeal. This house had its original garage (above) under a new full makeover, including the replacement of vinyl siding with reinforced brick shingles made of fiber cement. Working with designers at the Garage-based remodeling company Garages, the homeowners opted to replace the original double-wide garage door with a decorative carriage-style model outfitted with Craftsman-inspired light-colored hinges (right). Completing the look are new hardware flanking the door, solid brackets supporting the eaves at the top and corners, and a perforated sheet-metal guide attaching light windows.



3 connect it to the main structure

When a detached garage is located close enough to the house, it presents a prime opportunity for a small-scale expansion. In this case, TOPTV's Julia and project architect, Michael Christiane (top), converted a garage into a single-car garage (left) to the house with a handsome addition that includes a spacious mudroom (middle) as well as a small bathroom and bedroom (not shown). The family now walks directly from the car into the house during cold New England winters, and now have a perfect spot to hang the way to their big city without boots. The garage itself got a boost from a fresh paint job and a new light fixture.



A sleek and highly functional mudroom connects a further detached garage to the house.



got curb appeal?

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Outdoor
House

Stencil a border

Dress up a doorway—or any room feature—with a pattern of your own design

by JENNIFER HARRISON • Photography: KYLE SMITH

Cost: \$60

Time: 5 hours

Difficulty: Easy Making the stencil takes patience and precision, but the painting is a cinch.

Over the centuries, stencils have brought with them the European traditions of stenciling floral and fruit patterns on walls to mimic the look of costly wallpaper. Today, stenciling is still a cheap way to add charm to a room. If you've never worked with stencils before, painting a decorative border around a doorway is a project any novice can tackle. Though you can certainly work with pre-cut stencils, you'll get a more customized look if you design your own, as we did here. Follow along as senior editor of *This Old House* creates the pattern, cuts the stencil, and supplies on just enough paint to let the wall color show through for a look that's both old-world and up-to-date.



For complete instructions,
turn the page.

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4

Tip If you prefer full-plate coverage instead of a stippled look, dab on the paint in thin layers instead of applying a single thick coat.



5. Paint the rest of the border

A. Continue the pattern. Repeat Steps 3 and 4, working your way outward from the top stencil. Make sure the paint has dried on the adjacent project area before mounting each stencil and avoid overlapping areas that overlap where the pattern continues. Between areas, clean the wall with water and dry with a lint-free cloth or paper towel. Flip over the stencil stencil to paint the symmetrical pattern at the doorway's corners.

B. Finish the border. Mount the full stencil on the wall at the doorway. Paint the details down and in Step 4. Remove and dry the stencil, then flip it over and repeat on the opposite side. Allow paint to dry completely.



5



4. Paint the top detail

A. Load the brush. Pour paint into a small container. Dip the end of a flat, top stencil brush into the paint. Then lightly dab the ends of the brushes on a lint-free cloth or paper towel, leaving the brush nearly dry.

B. Paint the pattern. Using a dabbing motion and a very light touch, stroke the brush onto the open areas of the stencil. Avoid stroking near the ends of the stencil where the pattern will continue, as this may create a visible over-painted seam. Continue stippling until the pattern is filled in but the wall color underneath still shows through. Avoid using a back and forth motion while painting, which may leave brush marks and cause paint to bleed into the stencil.

C. Remove the stencil. When you're finished, carefully pull up one corner of the stencil, then peel it away from the wall at a sharp angle.

see how it's done

▶ Watch this step-by-step video for making stencils and painting this border on a bedroom door.

Other stencil ideas

Borders are just the beginning—there's no limit to the way that stenciled details can add visual variety and interest to a room. Play with patterns of different sizes and scales, or design a single motif for a special spot that instantly personalizes your space.



1. flower pattern

A sprig of stylized flowers repeated across a wall creates the look of wallpaper, forming a sophisticated and serene backdrop for bold patterns in the room.

2. single detail

Using a stencil by stenciling to one strategically placed motif. The red flower design creates a focal point above a handsome wood door, and the pattern is given a lively color scheme reminiscent of the room.

3. borders and details

An entryway gets a boost from its different borders painted along areas where moldings and corners meet walls. The additional larger details at the doorway wall draw the eye upward and emphasize the architecture of this space.



4. one pattern at different scales

A sprig of stylized flowers in two different sizes creates a true work of art, giving the effect of seeing the leaves and again the sky. Painted the same way with a stencil, the pattern helps unify this charming space.

what have you made lately?

Visit www.hgtv.com to see all the latest projects and ideas from the pros.

Spiced-up

Color

→ These **unexpected paint pairings** are sure to get your kitchen cooking

Combos

by Deborah
Goldstein

Photographs by
Lizette Moss
Production by
Celeste Swanson
Styling by
Angie Chaffin

If you're looking for a way to give the hub of your home a new look with maximum impact for maximum funds, consider a dose of color. As shown in the kitchens we've rounded up here, apple green with mustard yellow, tomato red with carbon black, sage gray and peachy green, deep plum and pale mint. And a room paired with vintage mixing-bowl blue. "Paint allows you to put your personal stamp on a kitchen," says Brian Yahn of Plain & Fancy Custom Cabinetry in Schaumburg, Pennsylvania, whose clients often request a custom hue—or two. With upper cabinets in one shade and base cabinets in another, island and perimeter cabinets in contrasting colors, or simple pantry areas painted to stand out like fashionistas, "it's one year's worth of kitchen," he says. "Color is power, the way it's right. For more on this and other lively pairings, turn the page."



apple red

Color by: 2010 F&S
Kitchen: carbon black, apple red
and green. Walls: eggplant
blue. Island: white. Stools:
apple red. Chair: apple red.
Cabinet: Plain & Fancy
Custom Cabinetry



Bright with black

Shined-upon green cabinets are grounded by both black base cabinets and whitewashed brick in the kitchen. The stainless steel finishes were also removed.

FOR A
DRAG-UP
LOOK,
TRY

Garden Teal
(Yellow)

Push Down
Valuator

A new kitchen is like a blank slate. You can color it any way you want. Just take a look at this kitchen-and-lundry room addition at Bonnie and Jim Casanova's home outside Chicago. The layout is pretty straightforward: The cooking area is flanked by small home-office and mudroom nooks, upper cabinets, prep space, and range set along one wall, windows, sink, and counter fill another, and island separates the cooking and family room areas.

But then things get interesting. Working with architect Healy Blum and kitchen designer Kirby Wicks, the couple stepped away from the traditional look of plain white cabinets. "I've always loved color," says Casanova, and that includes her favorite

shade of green. To keep the look sophisticated, she opted for black base cabinets with an aged patina, off-white marble countertops, and plenty of stainless steel.

To get the right shade, she handed a piece of fabric to decorative painter Alex Stefanidis, asking if he could replicate its nubby tone and soft texture. Using a bright green paint, amber-tinted glass, and a specialty brass-finish brush to add texture, he covered the range wall's upper cabinets with a broad swath of color. Then he tackled a hutch made of cabinets and butcher block on the rock wall, using a similar blend of paint, glass, and brass/bronze to create an antique mustard yellow.



Introducing acid

Factory-painted yellow cabinets in the home office evoke the same paint of butler's in the adjacent wall without replicating it exactly.

FOR A
DRAG-UP
LOOK,
TRY

Green Tea
(Yellow)

Casanova for the home office were ordered in a factory-applied yellow that echoes the hutch across the room. Grass-cloth wall covering adds a sophisticated pop and warm neutral backdrop, while red accents provide punch.

The color chosen may be controversial, but they were hardly random. "It took a lot of time to think about ways to use color and create a balanced look," says Wicks. To help get it right, Casanova made copies of the architectural elevations and used crayons to color them in a half-dozen different combinations.

Gray shades of yellow, green, and orange not only define the cooking space but also help give different areas of the addition distinct identities. More important, "the kitchen is really happy," says Bonita. "People love to be in this room."

not blown off yellow

To add depth and texture, the hutch was hand-painted in green, and a dry brush was dragged through the paintcoat. Glass-front wall covering needed to be between the brights.

FOR A
DRAG-UP
LOOK,
TRY

Push Down
Valuator



BLACK CABINETS WORK TO GROUND ALL THE VIBRANT COLORS IN THE ROOM AND ADD A SOPHISTICATED EDGE.

Push Down
Valuator

More unexpected color combos

AS THESE SURPRISING PAIRINGS PROVE, LOTS OF DIFFERENT COLORS CAN WORK TOGETHER



Lacquer Red + Black

This bold color was designed by Palm & Pencil Custom Cabinetry, pairs colors at equal intensity: bright on top, dark below. To keep all that red from looking like a serving station and Christy's kitchen, the company added two-toned cabinets that would be at home in a formal dining room. Pairing a stainless-steel countertop and a red and white marble tile backsplash helping the transition down to warmer.

FOR A
SIMILAR
LOOK
TRY



Taupe Gray + Pistachio Green

Gray is fast becoming a popular choice for kitchen cabinets, and at this Washington, D.C. kitchen, designer Jennifer Garner and architect Jerry Kaprielian decided to define the cooking and cleaning areas. They had the custom cabinetmaker paint the island and a curved hutch a soft green pick-up by the local paint store. The Costa Espresso granite countertop ties the two colors together with the stone's greenish-gray veining and green flecks.

FOR A
SIMILAR
LOOK
TRY



Pewter/White + White

The oldest kid in the family, Arkansas, kitchen was matched to a well-used age range. Designer Rusty Lynn Calaway used it to create a blue and white backdrop for handcrafted appliances and white quartz countertops. Half the fun of mixing the colors in upper and lower cabinets was the use of vertical columns of color to add a modern edge to the room.

FOR A
SIMILAR
LOOK
TRY



Pewter White
Glidden



Plum + Mint

The owners of this traditional-looking kitchen in Alexandria, Virginia, liked the flavor that mint green brought to their cabinets but realized that doing all of them one color would be "too pastel, bright and monotonous," says their kitchen designer Eric Lieberknecht. So they decided to add deep plum to the rest of upper cabinets and take down to the island with brown tiled glass. Wine and gettable glims fronts add to the upper cabinets, distraction and make them focal points. Unifying the wood on the lower cabinets, the island, and the countertop and messy brown-painted shelves.

FOR A
SIMILAR
LOOK
TRY



have you played with color?

Get inspired by our color guide and see how you can mix and match colors in your home. Visit www.glidden.com/color



FULLY LOADED LAUNDRY ROOMS

Efficient wash-and-dry centers designate a place for each step of the laundry process, from sorting to folding. Coming up, seven well-ordered and welcoming setups

As Americans spend more time in the laundry room than in the bathroom, an average of eight hours a week, collectively doing some 35 billion loads of laundry a year. And yet, while bath design has evolved into a discipline of its own, and the space into a bona fide retreat with soothing soaker tubs, the laundry is often relegated to a basement, separated from the life of the house. Increasingly, though, homeowners are creating laundry rooms that are as integrated as a bath or the kitchen. They can even be in a bath or kitchen. Chalk it up to better lives and a need to multitask, says designer Dana Jones of Long Beach, California. A first-floor laundry room can serve as a command center—a nook near the family room, where parents can keep an eye on the kids while folding, or off the back door, where it can double as a mudroom, home office, or hobby area. On the second floor, stackable, whisper-quiet front-loaders can tuck into a hall closet, just a folded-up-shirt toss from the bedroom. For help locating your wash-and-dry space closer to the hub of your home and boosting its function, check out the elements of the decked-out laundry at right. Then, on the following pages, see how three scenarios, as well as other smart ideas and versatile layouts, are put to work.

Laundry list

Along with a washer and dryer, consider these elements:

a) **Task lighting:** such as under-cabinet strips illuminates specific work zones. Ambient sources like recessed light or a ceiling fixture brighten the room.

b) **A utility sink:** multitasks as a hand-washing station, a place to soak soiled sports gear, even an area to pot plants.

c) **Hanging racks:** provide a place to air-dry delicates and hang shirts straight from the dryer. Choose a wall bar, a retractable clothesline, or a fold-up rack.

d) **Countertops:** at varying heights suit different jobs. A raised surface atop front loaders is perfect for folding, while a 36-inch height is the norm at a sink.

e) **Cabinetry:** from hidden detergent and cleaning supplies, as well as a long-board, pull-out hamper and sliding utility rails.

f) **Open storage:** above a counter keeps toiletries, folded dry-line rubbers can encourage kids to drop off their dirts and retrieve clean laundry themselves.

g) **Water-resistant materials:** such as concrete counters and stone-floor tiles, are durable and easy to clean. A removable top and padding like a thickly alternatives.





Colonize a closet

Fitted with a water line for the washer and outwork for the dryer, the built closet was transformed into an efficient home for a laundry room.

Stackable machines: A front-loading design allows a full-size washer and dryer, such as these from Whirlpool, to squeeze into narrow passages, leaving room to one side and above for open storage shelves.

Clever connection: With the sliding door open, clever built-in shelves allow easy by with paint, making the space feel connected rather than shut off.

Italy line: In a do-it-yourself clothes, a combination of solid and open-top woven containers hold cleaning supplies, extra linens, and towels.



Hide in the kitchen

Tucked into the corner of a cooking space and concealed by cabinetry, this laundry area incorporates its a balcony.

Clever cover-ups: Fitted with "flipper" media cabinet hardware (see list at \$36, rockler.com), 30-inch-wide cabinet doors open out into the room, then slide back into the cabinet to reveal a front-loading washer and dryer. Underneath sliding doors, these can be viewed without eating up floor space or blocking access to end-point cooking.

Overhead storage: Upper cabinets serve as a linen closet and are deep enough to store small laundry baskets.

Counter charades: When not congested to food clothes and items, the kitchen island serves the washer and dryer, turning into a sideboard (see right) for setting out serving dishes, glassware, and buffet-style meals.



PHOTOS: JENNIFER ANDERSON/STYLING: JILL ANDERSON; JENNIFER ANDERSON/STYLING: JILL ANDERSON; JENNIFER ANDERSON/STYLING: JILL ANDERSON



Reversing a catchall

What was once a combo mudroom and entry with a washer and dryer showcased its size a dedicated laundry area, each with hidden conveniences.

Sealing drawer: Similar to a kitchen cutting tray, this in-drawer organizer (see list) helps keep things tidy, and prevents dirt from the laundry from reaching the rest of the room.

Retractable ironing board: With little space to prop up a traditional ironing board, the homeowners chose a folding version (see list, top middle) that fits neatly inside a drawer (see list, top middle) and folds out when needed. A built-in ironing board is a handy feature.

Push-out hamper: Concealed inside a drawer below the ironing board is a clever hamper (see list, top right) that holds clothes in need of pressing. A matching bin on the other side of the machine keeps dirt out of sight.

Under-cabinet light: A halogen strip tucked behind a soft light fixture is a quiet counter used for specific tasks, sewing, and folding, and a handy to store. A halogen, ambient light comes from the window, and ceiling fixtures.



Clean up the garage

Inventive storage solutions, vibrant paint, and a DPF-friendly floating floor made of cushiony cork transform what had been an unused parking space into a bright and zippy laundry room.

Stained wall Designed as vertical storage for car-care supplies, such as jumper cables, a system like the Gladiator Gear Wall Panels (\$90 each) can easily corral laundry supplies when checked out with hook-on wire shelves and baskets.

Machine pedestals Most major brands sell drawers like these from Avonite that fit neatly beneath the matching washer and dryer. Drawers are 10 1/2 x 35 1/4 inches tall and cost \$190 to \$300 each.

Upgraded utility sink A rustic enclosure made from whitewash shed-wood gives an inexpensive plastic sink a stylish look.

Rethink a home office

Rather than dedicating a spare room or a portion of the kitchen to bill-paying and web surfing, a spacious laundry area becomes head to a home-based home office.

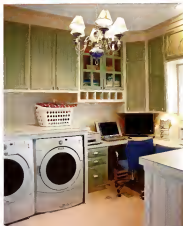
Custom desk The counter height goes from about 42 inches atop the machines for folding and hanging clothes, to just 30 inches at the desk, the standard for comfort at a sit-down workstation.

Set for work In addition to a cable hookup for high-speed Internet access and extra electrical outlets for computer peripherals, the office is outfitted with red-toile drawers and cubbies for sorting mail.

Homey details A sage-green washboard-style paint scheme gives the utility a warm, antiques-like feel, connects the laundry to the rest of the house. The black-painted chair is another elegant touch in an unexpected place.

did you redo a room?

Enter our Reader's Digest Redo Contest. Contest rules and request a copy of our Reader's Digest Redo Contest. Visit www.rd.com/redo.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF: (TOP) JAMES HANCOCK; (BOTTOM) JAMES HANCOCK

Turn a backslash into a message board by installing an overhead panel. Call your local office depot.



Create a multifunctional hobby space

This cheery room welcomes rings of the domestic arts, from laundry and sewing to crafting and gift wrapping. It's where the family can be together while taking part in a variety of activities.

Bath with a view Scrubbing stains and rinsing watercolor brushes is less of a chore when the sink is installed below a window that overlooks the landscape. The window also provides a natural source of ambient light for the room, and supplies fresh air and ventilation to prevent humidity from building up when the washer and dryer are used.

Bright wall tiles Six-by-six-inch glass squares create a water-resistant backsplash. The multihued patchwork pattern fits the mood of the room and reflects the laundry area, with its baskets of colorful towels, and the gift-wrap station, with its bins of red, gold, and orange ribbons, twine and garlands.

Functional built-ins Shaker-style cabinets coated with easy-to-clean high-gloss paint create a cottage feeling in the room and hide everything from fabric cutters to glass blocks. The pantry to the right of the machines is tall enough to stow full-size rolling boards.

Painting in place night Despite the array of appliance color choices out there—fire-engine red, silver-gray, cobalt blue—these homeowners went with a white finish to match the washer and dryer, sleek topper and the white cabinetry and countertops. ■

big impact diy*

*for Every Budget

by Jennifer Ottispace Photographs by Ryan Kneip

Whether you've got a lot or just a little to spend, the editors of *This Old House* have a spruce-up project for you. By simplifying the steps and reining in costs on four high-style jobs often left to the pros, we show how to save a bundle while making impressive home improvements yourself. Follow along for the stunning, yet surprisingly easy and affordable transformations.



To freshen up a fireplace without burning a hole in your wallet, keep the mantel—just swap in a new stone surround and add doors.

Turn the page for the step-by-step.

Reface the fireplace

Budget: \$660 to \$1,000

Key players: Marble surround, brass-framed fireplace doors
DIY savings: Up to \$800 to hire a fireplace pro

At the focal point of a room, the fireplace shows off every penny of a makeover fund. Here, we replaced a dark stone surround with richly veined marble and enclosed the prefabricated fireplace with glass doors set within a polished-brass frame.

To keep costs down on the surround, we hit the remnants section of our local stoneyard and nabbed a slab cut into three 36-inch-thick pieces for the top and two side legs. Prices start at \$199 for the stone and installation. We paid \$450 for our set Perennia marble (perenniamarble.com), including the total outfit to \$809, including \$424 for the Thermo-Rite doors (thermoreite.com).

By leaving the wood mantel in place and covering only the area that overlapped the surround, we minimized the work—and the waste.



don't have a prefab firebox?

SEARCH FOR THE NEW DESIGN MASONRY KIT AT [boschhouse.com/series](http://www.boschhouse.com/series)

How to do it

1. Take off the molding along the mantel's outer edge. Start by sawing the painted trim with a utility knife. Then slide a putty knife into the seam and rock it back and forth to pry the molding well loose. Remove the side strips before moving on to the top one.

2. Remove the existing surround using a prybar wedged between the floor and the wall. Start at the top end of a side leg, levering the bar behind the exterior trim to break the tile seal at the wall. Slide the bar along the leg, prying as you go until the piece comes loose. Repeat for the remaining leg and top piece. Then scrape away any leftover adhesive on the wall.

3. Affix the new surround with a construction adhesive for stone, such as Loctite Liquid Nails. Squirt two beads into the back of the first leg, and press the stone into place. Repeat the process with the second leg. For the wider top piece, apply an extra bead of adhesive down the center. Replace the marbled ceiling.

4. Install the fireplace doors. Start by fitting the doors' frame into the holes opening. Use a drill/driver to keep it level in the slots of the frame, making sure to penetrate the side walls of the flanges. Secure the frame with the screws provided. Then slide the doors onto the frame rails, and level them by adjusting the pivot screws at the top and bottom as needed.

Tip

To hide wall marks in a visible area, hearthstone installed a soft-tan rayon fabric layer of linoleum linoleum, then wiped off the excess with a rag.



Hook up a pendant

Budget: \$75 to \$200

Key players: Pendant light, recessed-can conversion kit
DIY savings: Up to \$200 to hire an electrician

By swapping a recessed can for a pendant, you can elegantly bring task lighting down from ceiling height to where it's needed. In this case, just above a kitchen sink.

To be so with other accents, such as the chrome faucet and white tile backsplash, we chose a mini pendant with a polished-nickel finish and opal glass shade for \$135 from a lighting shop (acchocohouse.com). You can find similar pendants at home centers for as little as \$35.

Instead of calling an electrician, we used a \$40 recessed-can conversion kit (the recesscan.com) and wired up the pendant ourselves for a grand total of \$175.

How to do it

1. Install the converter. Cut power to the fixture and remove the bulb and can's outer glass. Then secure the conversion kit in the recess, as per the manufacturer's instructions, inserting the mounting surface so that it's flush with the ceiling.

2. Hook up the pendant by bolting the fire-rated black metal hanger wires together and capping each end with a wire nut. Wrap the fixture's green wire around the converter's grounding screw. Push the decorative mounting plate over (included with the converter) and tighten the provided canopy bracket. Remove the shade and bolt to a screw bulb.





Add shapely stair brackets

Budget: \$150 to \$250
Key players: Decorative wood stair brackets
DIY savings: Up to \$600 to hire a finish carpenter

The newel post and balusters grab all the attention, while the exposed side of most staircases is largely ignored. But with the addition of decorative stair brackets, a bland riser can become an elegant eye-catcher.

Here we used simple-to-install wood brackets that go up with adhesive and nails. To make the project even easier, we had the stock 3/4-inch-thick profile custom-milled to just fit such so that the bracket would be slightly recessed beneath the existing scot molding that skirts the riser. Any thicker and we would have had to remove the scot molding and replace it with longer strips that could wrap the brackets. Customization adds to the \$4 to \$13 price per bracket (stairpartusa.com), depending on the particular wood type, but the DIY-friendly installation makes it well worth the extra \$40 or so. We spent \$180 total for over 12 poplar brackets.



(before)



How to do it

1. Steady each bracket at the riser's base and mark the length of the riser and half of the riser. Number the back side of the brackets so you know where one goes when.

2. Trim the brackets to fit with another saw, using the pencil marks as a guide. We cut the top, bottom and sides at a 45-degree angle to match the riser. But you can also leave square.

3. Rough up the surface of the painted riser with a medium-grit sanding sponge so that the brackets will better adhere to it.

4. Apply adhesive to the back of the first bracket and press it in place. Wipe away any adhesive that seeps out from behind with a rag.

5. Secure the bracket with two nails at the top, bottom, and along the bracket's decorative edge. Repeat the glue and nail steps for each of the remaining brackets.

6. Prime the brackets for paint. Use adhesive caulk to fill nail holes and the joint between each bracket and the front of the stair tread. Smooth rough edges with the sanding sponge.

7. Prime and paint each bracket, and touch up the riser if needed.

Tip

To make it a cinch to glue the brackets, make the bracket's back as short as possible and use the scot molding from the opposite side.

Enhance an entry with hardware

Budget: \$250 to \$500
Key players: Entry set, knocker, kickplate
D/IY savings: Up to \$250 to here in locksmiths

Making a memorable first impression is tough if your front door has ho-hum hardware. Even worse is a tarnished, pitiful entry set with a peeling lacquer finish, like the one below.

To give the door more polish, we stopped around for a shiny brass replacement. But rather than get a set from a specialty hardware shop, where they can easily top \$1,000, we chose a solid-wire one-piece handle and tubular lockset with a handsome escutcheon for \$179 from the home center (homedepot.com). Hardware manufacturers' home-center bins, which range from \$100 to \$350, are also easier to retrofit because they're designed for DIYers.

Completing the door's makeover is a shapely new knocker for \$41 and a gleaming kick plate for \$66 (expeditions.com), for a total project cost of \$286.



How to do it

1. Remove the old entry set by taking out the mounting screws that secure the strike or knob assembly. Turn down to the exterior handle and lock cylinder. To remove the dead bolt and latch bolt, unscrew their escutcheons, located on the door's inner edge. Replace the existing strike and kickplate on the door frame with the new ones provided with your set.

2. Install the exterior handle. With the exterior bolt and latch bolt in place, fit the handle over the door's existing holes. The screws for the handle's lock cylinder and thumb latch should easily slide into the pre-drilled and latch bolt assemblies.

3. Secure the interior hardware. Fit the lock over the pre-drilled cylinder post and put the knob's spindle and escutcheon assembly on the thumb latch post. Insert both with existing screws. Next, fit the knob on the spindle and tighten its set screw. To steady the knob of the handle, insert a screwdriver and slide its head with the decorative cover supplied.

Finally, finish off your front door transformation by drilling holes for and fastening the new knocker and kickplate.



How to pick a new entry set

The key to an easy entry upgrade is finding a handle-and-lock assembly that fits up with your door's existing set. Follow these guidelines to ensure that your new set will fit a perfect fit.

Lock type

There are two options: A tubular lock, which installs in two holes in the door, and a mortise lock, which requires one hole. Tubular locks are more widely available, easier to install and less expensive. Mortise locks, which tend to be more sturdy-built, require a locksmith to install unless you give an expert a hand. Make sure your new set replaces the same lock type as the old one. Also check the dimensions of the strike plate to ensure it will fit in the existing impression in the door frame to avoid having to drill out a hole.

Door swing

Entry sets with handle-and-lock components are designed to be right- or left-hand door swing. To know whether yours is right- or left-hand swing, stand outside and note whether the handle is attached to a door that can open on the left, use, for instance, swings to the left.

Plate placement

Remove the interior knob and thumb-latch lock for clues. To expose the holes in the door, slide them from the center of the knob hole to the center of the latch hole, disturbing the spread. On replacement set with a one-piece exterior component that bolts both the lock cylinder and latch plate. Lefty the spread must fulfill the hole's width. Choose a two-piece set if you want more design room. Measure the distance from the inner edge of the door to the center of the knob hole. Locksets are typically either 2 1/2 or 2 3/4 inches. With the door closed, the new escutcheon or cap plate should lay over the hole, leaving at least 1/2 inch between inner outside edges and the door top.

what have you built?

Your latest DIY creation will show it all in a home improvement magazine. Get your photo in the next issue of *Home Improvement* magazine.

ALL ABOUT

Laminate

The stuff of retro 1960s kitchens is looking cool again, thanks to new patterns and vibrant colors. This *Old House*'s experts show how to use this tough, affordable, and easy-to-care-for surfacing in your home. *By Thomas Baker*

Plastic laminate is the charmer of the building world, able to give the most mundane surface the look of polished granite, exotic hardwood, vibrant animal print, or patterned wallpaper. And though not much thicker than a credit card, laminate is as tough as rhino skin and virtually impervious to water, staining, scratching, fading, or cracking.

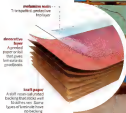
Laminate, made of thin sheets of heat-treated paper topped with a melamine plastic, gained widespread popularity after World War II, popping up everywhere, in kitchens, bathrooms, restaurants, and high-end furniture. Embraced by famed architects like Charles and Ray Eames, Joseph Eichler, and even Frank Lloyd Wright, this modern material—sturdy, economical, low-maintenance—captured the very essence of the modern lifestyle of the 1940s and '60s.

Laminate is now enjoying a renaissance of sorts as a new generation rediscovered its practical virtues and fun looks. Laminate has been improved over the years with sharper, more realistic images, new textures, greater scratch resistance, and more color choices than ever.

On the following pages, we show all the plastic laminate can be used, some of the dozens of patterns and hues it comes in, and different edge treatments. You'll also find tips on how to care for and repair laminate if it gets damaged. So scroll on to learn how a product that's old enough to be a grandfather continues to reinvent itself and stay relevant—cool, even.

What is laminate?

Heat and pressure turn layers of paper and plastic resins into a tough-as-nails sheet.



Laminate is not just for countertops. Here, colorful sheets get cabinet doors and drawer fronts (and a playful island) the look. Similar to stone, vinyl, acrylic, and other plastics, \$1.30 per square foot. daveandkatekitchen.com

VITALS

What's it cost?

At home centers, you pay as little as \$1.50 per square foot for a sheet of DIY laminate used for countertops, wall panels, and cabinet doors. Pro jobs (panels for shelving and cabinet interiors) start at about \$2–40 per square foot.

What's the warranty?

Laminate typically carries a lifetime great-sounding warranty, but the material itself isn't indestructible.



DIY or hire a pro?

You'll need a pro for a countertop with an integral sink or swapped-apart edge. But you can make your own laminate countertops, cabinets, and wall panels with the sheets and bookbinders sold at home centers.

How much care?

Clean laminate with nonabrasive, nonbleach cleaners. It's almost as durable as stone without being down hot, softening or melting under an iron or hairdryer.

Not all laminate is created equal

The surfacing is made differently depending on how it's used. Here are the three main types of laminate.

High-pressure laminate (HPL):

These sheets, backed by layers of kraft paper, come in two sizes: thick, for horizontal surfaces like countertops, tables, and desktops, and thin, for vertical surfaces, panels, and cabinet doors. Both kinds are usually glued to particleboard. To find out where sheets—and prefinished doors and panels with backing already adhered—are sold, go to manufacturer websites, such as formica.com and wilsonart.com.

Low-pressure laminate (LPL):

This panel material is made of a single sheet of decorative paper that's incorporated with melamine resin and bonded to either a particleboard or medium-density fiberboard (MDF) substrate. LPL is used primarily for shelving and for cabinet interiors. Available in solid colors or two wood-grain, though somewhat scratch- and stain-resistant, it's not as tough as HPL. Buy panels at home centers—Uniboards are in stock—or get just the material sheets from online sellers, such as itl.com and itlproducts.com, and use them onto a substrate yourself.

Thermoplastic laminate: Layers of plastic or acrylic topped with metal foil paper are fused into sheets without those dimensional features or high-gloss sheens. Some sheets can be affixed to walls and ceilings with a throw-on adhesive, others have to be mounted on particleboard. Most are not suitable for countertops. One company, Advanced Technology Inc., sells through distributors listed on its website.

Where to use it

For a good-looking surface that hardly needs any care, no finish can match laminate. That's why you can use it just about anywhere in the house.

Cabinets

High-pressure laminate on the doors and drawers fronts means these cabinets will retain their bright color for years to come without fading. Shown: Legno Colorel \$679/door, \$250 per square foot; studiomart.com



Shelves

Low-pressure laminate panels provide a quick and easy way to make shelving and cabinet interiors for kitchens, offices, and workshops. Shown: Customizable wire shelving system in Maple, starting at \$100 per linear foot, californiahardware.com



Countertops

This granite laminate countertop looks like granite but takes its wear from the solid front edge to the tapered back edge, a feature no stone countertop has. Shown: Fusedback counter in Fumica's Buttermilk Granite, \$150 per square foot; formica.com



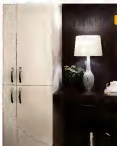
Furniture

Unlike paint, laminate never needs refreshing. This endray console is finished in CelinoCore 2, a high-pressure laminate that has none of the off-white beamed edges that typically show when a piece is in contact. Shown: Spectrum Red, \$55 per square foot; formica.com



Backsplashes

A laminate backsplash with a layer of modified aluminum creates a kitchen kitchen backsplash. A high-pressure laminate such as this must first be glued to a layer of MDF or particleboard that is stuck to a drywall wall. construction solutions. Shown: Back Splash Capelli, \$25 per square foot; wilsonart.com



Wall paneling

When applied to an 800-series laminate, this laminate displays the full color of the full edge, and the temporary wallpaper is durable. As with backsplashes (above), HPL sheets like this one have to be adhered to a substrate before going on the wall. Shown: Burnt Sienna, \$12 per square foot; formica.com

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to know all about?

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Pick your color and pattern

From jet-age boomers to hammered copper, laminate comes in a multitude of looks. Here's just a sampling.

Beach dune

This particleboard thermoplastic laminate has a 3-D texture resembling sand dunes and, EcoPac's design, starting at \$6.50 per sq. ft. advtechl.com

Patinated metal

Avicoding's patent applied for stainless steel-veneer sheet, unique, Nature Metal Wraps Collection, \$14.67 per sq. ft. shineta.com

Boomerangs

Created by Raymond Lowery in the 1950s, this is a classic example of mid-century modern design. Clearview Boomerang, \$7.50 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Hammered copper

Also applied to lampy glass, looks like the real thing. But only on walls. Metal has hammer starting at \$9.15 per sq. ft. advtechl.com

Redripple

Scraped/grooved add shadow lines to vertical applications. Clearview Redripple, \$2.29 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Tiny bubbles

This ultra-empire pattern is embedded in high-pressure laminate. Bubbly, \$2.18 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Natural fiber

A row of banana fiber fibers, imported in organic look. Green/Alaska, \$3.40 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Concrete

Made using pink dye, laminate the look and feel of concrete. Clearview Concrete, \$2.00 per sq. ft. advtechl.com

Granite

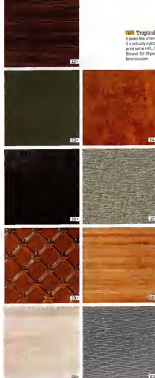
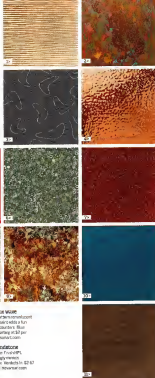
A pattern of granite (38 shades of black/white). Granite, \$2.00 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Blue wave

A wavy pattern reminiscent of a big wave adds a fun touch to the look. Blue Wave, starting at \$2.00 per sq. ft. advtechl.com

Sandstone

This matte, 3D-HPL, contemporary wave sandstone. Reverts In, \$2.10 per sq. ft. laminate.com



Tropical timber

It looks like mahogany, but it's actually a photographic print set in HPL. Shiva Island, \$2.29 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Moist green

Three multi-toned, earthy shades of green in a pattern that resembles fine green leather. Rust House, \$2.67 per sq. ft. advtechl.com

Shiny bark

The shiny, green, maple-like bark of the maple tree is the focus of this laminate. ClearView Maple Bark, starting at \$4.50 per sq. ft. advtechl.com

3-D texture

A diamond pattern and three metal finishes in eye-catching, backlit, 3D-laminated ClearView, starting at \$8.15 per sq. ft. advtechl.com

Rough stone

The textured, 3D surface contains aluminum oxide for high scratch resistance. Luna Night, starting at \$2.75 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Loose veneer

The stone-like look is rough, but the surface is smooth. Pressure Warp, \$2.75 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Metal swirl

In local brushed aluminum for use on vertical surfaces. DecoMetal Swirl, \$2.00 per sq. ft. advtechl.com

Victorian lattice

The visual pattern in this laminate makes a person's eye follow the lines. Annapolis, starting at \$6.15 per sq. ft. advtechl.com

Bamboo

Another laminated bamboo for vertical surfaces has a water-, stain-, and scratch-resistant finish. Venetia Art Natural Bamboo, \$10.00 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Blue shimmer

Streaked with sparkles, the surface has a shimmering effect. Blue Shimmer, \$2.23 per sq. ft. laminate.com

White wash

It replicates the soft look of whitewashed pine. White Wash, \$2.50 per sq. ft. laminate.com

Wavy metal

Actual aluminum is processed with a wavy metal pattern. DecoMetal Aluminum Yield, \$10.77 per sq. ft. laminate.com

How to handle the oops!

Laminate is tough, but it's not totally immune to damage. TOH general contractor Tom Silva explains what to do about blisters.

Burns: If a hot pot crumbles a smoky blister on your countertop, peel out the affected area and fill the recess with a heat-proof cutting board, like the Surface Sewer (www.sinc.com).



Delamination: Occasionally an edge or a top edge pops away from its base. Most times, if you need to use a heat gun or a heat gun to reactivate the adhesive (shown left), use a rolling pin to press the laminate back in place. Weight it down for 24 hours.

Chips: Despite small chips with color-matched laminate repair pens, such as SeamFix (americantechnology.com), larger chips are irreparable; you have to replace the entire surface. So, for countertops, you can put a new sheet of laminate over the old one. Fill the chip with Bondo, then sand it smooth. Rough up the old surface with 80-grit sandpaper, and adhere the new sheet with contact cement.

Stains: Apply dish soap to the stain and let it sit overnight, covered with plastic wrap to keep it moist. Then wipe clean in the morning. Avoid abrasive cleaners, which leave residue that can pick up dirt. Use bleach only as a last resort, dabbing stains with a cotton ball. Rinse thoroughly; bleach residue can discolor laminate.

Environmental scorecard



Air quality: High-density laminate sheets are GreenGuard certified, meaning they pass strict tests for off-gassing. To further limit exposure to toxic chemical emissions, use low-VOC contact adhesive and particleboard-based backs made without urea-formaldehyde glue. Get board cut piece location and www.sinc.com.

Recycled content: Laminates typically have some recycled content in their paper backing. Wilsonart's line has as much as 20 percent. In formaldehyde-free laminates from Abel Laminate, see 100 percent recycled but won't work as counters. For extra eco cred, adhere the sheets to 100-percent recycled (FSC-certified) particleboard made of wood from well-managed forests.



New sinks for laminate

One of the hardest knocks against laminate countertops was that they required a drop-in sink—one that rested on top of the counter so that the particleboard base was protected from water. Unlike undermount sinks for stone or seamless integral sinks for solid-surfacing, drop-ins have a lip that accumulates grime and makes wipe-downs more difficult.

But now, thanks to special water-proof adhesives and new installation techniques, there are acrylic and stainless-steel sinks with lips that go under the laminate. These sinks, from Wilsonart (shown above) and Karron, must be professionally installed; a basic acrylic version adds about \$400 to the cost of a counter.

how to install and repair laminate

Watch how TOH's Tom Silva and Tom Wenzel show you how to install and repair laminate.

Edge upgrades

Counter edges don't have to be squared, or even covered with laminate. Here are different ways to add shape, durability, and class.



Metal

For that extra edge look, wrap the edge with a strip of metal in stainless steel or aluminum (shown). Clip-on, 2½-inch-wide stainless-steel edges can be installed on straight runs by 10th Avenue Aluminum Edges can be straight or curved but require cutting a slot in the edge of the counter. Stainless clip-ons, \$4.80 per linear foot, are available starting at \$1,200 per linear foot. www.10thave.com

Solid surfacing

The durable, low-maintenance material built on with an acrylic adhesive, can be cut and shaped like metal but doesn't require a professional finish.

Pro-installation shops (shown left) start at \$20 per linear foot. DIY shops run about \$7 per linear foot. www.10thave.com



Wrapped

A stainless-steel or acrylic edge is made in a factory using heat and pressure. Order the material through a home center or a fabricator and get a ready-to-install counter starting at \$2.40 per square foot. Find fabricators through www.10thave.com.

Banded

A 45-degree bevel in the top of the counter's edge bands shows off chipping or mending more than a standard square edge. Banded cuts about \$4.00 per linear foot. Colors by a pro DIY shop, starting at \$1 per linear foot, are available from www.10thave.com.



Rebuilt

Reformed with a new, waterproof back, its laminate is made of recycled, fused, and easily shaped into different profiles. But the new under-laminate is made of a tough old factory installed white oak rising starts at \$30 per linear foot. Find oak laminate for DIY installation from www.10thave.com.

★ Our cast of veteran experts



TOM SILVA
General Contractor



ROME BERTANI
Master Carpenter



RICHARD TRETHEWEY
Plumbing and Heating Expert



ROGER COOK
Landscaping Contractor



KEVIN CONROY
Painter

Q My contractor turned off the gas meter so that he can start a major renovation on my house. I always thought only the gas company should mess with the meter. Am I wrong? —KEVIN RING DETROIT, MI

Richard Trethewey replies: No, certainly. Turning off gas at the meter is something we do as a matter of course at The Old House whenever we undertake a big renovation project. Gas companies are also happy to show customers how to shut off gas at the meter because doing so is an emergency, such as an earthquake, can avert a disaster. That's why it's not a bad idea to keep an adjustable wrench near the meter just in case.

But—and that is important—companies don't want homeowners turning the gas back on. They want to be the ones to do it because it gives them a chance to check the entire system and ensure that there aren't any leaks and everything is working properly, including all the joint fittings.

You can close the shut-off valves at each appliance, but that won't prevent a leak if lines leading to the appliance are accidentally damaged during demolition work or as a byproduct of rebuilding. Shutting off the gas at the meter may seem a little over-the-top, but when safety is involved, that's fine with me.

As a matter of safety, Tom plumbing and heating expert Richard Trethewey shuts off the gas at the beginning of a big remodel. But it's the gas company's responsibility to turn it back on and make sure the system is leak-free.

Q ROTTING DOOR TRIM For some reason, the horizontal trim piece above my front door always splits off after I replace it, even when I use mahogany. A similar thing is happening around the bottom of the door frame. Will I have to remove the entire frame?

—SILVIA ARMENTA, GUELPH, N.J.

Nanci Abrams replies: The problem in both locations is that moisture is getting into the end grain of the wood and causing it to rot. All wood absorbs moisture evenly through their end grain, and all woods, even oak and mahogany, will eventually fail if their end grain gets wet frequently.

New trim, before you install a replacement piece, brush the ends with a water-repellent wood preservative that's compatible with the type of paint you want to use. Let the preservative then prime all the sides of the wood—edges, faces, and ends. And when you install the wood, be sure to use a high-quality polyurethane finish, then carefully caulk all the joints before painting the trim.

One thing that's contributing to the problem with the door frame is the most threshold, which has probably been transferring moisture to the wood's end grain. Brush the stone with a masonry sealer to maintain that tendency. Any new wood trim should sit on a board 1/4 inch short of the stone to prevent moisture from seeping between the two. Fill that joint with caulk before you paint.

You can also replace the rotted trim with a cellular PVC product, such as Aztec or Kleer, which is rot-resistant and comes in the same sizes as wood trim but isn't rot or absorb moisture. Cellular PVC does expand and contract lengthwise slightly with temperature changes, but no more



A-I-Low Stretchers

B-I-Silica

C-I-Capex

D-I-De

E-I-De

F-I-De

G-I-De

H-I-De

I-I-De

J-I-De

K-I-De

L-I-De

M-I-De

N-I-De

O-I-De

P-I-De

Q-I-De

R-I-De

S-I-De

T-I-De

U-I-De

V-I-De

W-I-De

X-I-De

Y-I-De

Z-I-De



On this door frame peeling paintwork that ends in wood trim boards. If you're in a hurry, it's better to bring soaked up by unprotected and grain, a process that inevitably leads to wood decay.

lengths such as this I don't think that it will be an issue as long as you follow the manufacturer's guidelines.

As for the door frame, the bottom doesn't look too bad, so I don't think it has to be replaced. Repair the wood by scraping out the punky material, brushing the area with a wood stabilizer, and filling the void with an exterior wood filler. Sand the filler smooth, then prime. Caulk any joints and paint the repair.

NOTCHED JOISTS

A home inspector says we need to fix floor joists notched by a plumber years ago. What's the best way to do it?

—LARRY BENTLE FLORENCE, S.C.

Tom Silva replies: There are a couple of ways to tackle the repair, depending on how deep the notch is, where it is, and how much the joist has been weakened.

If the joist is sagging severely, or if you can see horizontal cracks going out from the notch, remove the pipe,

jack up the joist until it's level, then glue and nail 4x4 plywood in both sides using construction adhesive and 4d common nails. The plywood should be as deep as the joist, and at least 4 feet long, and its face grain should run in the same direction as the joist. Space the nails at 8 inches apart and stagger them across the surface of the plywood. Then drill a hole for the pipe and reinstall it.

If the joist isn't sagging noticeably, you can reinforce it without removing the pipe. Cut two pieces of plywood as above, but attach them so that they run around the pipe. Don't let the plywood and the pipe because they will squish as they rub against each other. Glue and nail the plywood in place.

If the notch is in the bottom of the joist and the joist isn't sagging too much, another approach is to bridge it with a 12-gauge galvanized metal repair strap long enough to extend at least a foot beyond the notch on both sides. Jack up the joist slightly, then nail the strap to the bottom edge with 4d nails.

Q OLD BASEBOARD, NEW FLOORS
I plan to install engineered wood flooring in my house. I've already cut the ends of the door jams with an undercut saw so that the new flooring will slip underneath. Now how do I undercut baseboards? I can't remove them because they're part of the wallcovering.

—BUTCHER, Fitchburg, MA

Norm Abram replies: Even if you didn't have the wallcovering, taking off the baseboards, particularly in an old house, usually causes more problems. A better approach is to cut them in place using a jacking saw, a power tool often used by flooring contractors. These tools are sold either standing at about \$30 or can be rented from a tool center or a flooring distributor. They can't cut into inside corners—that requires a chisel and some patience—but otherwise the work should go fairly quickly.

Here's another, possibly easier way to go. Run the new flooring up to the baseboard, leaving the required expansion gap, then cover that gap with quarter-round or base-board molding forward to the baseboard. For best appearance, retape the molding on itself before it touches the door casing.

Q ERODING DIRT DRIVEWAY
I have a driveway that's mostly dirt with some gravel mixed in. I've had to fill several times because of water washing over the drive when we get big storms. It'll be to pave it, but in this climate, asphalt and concrete make too much heat. Do you think a "green" driveway that allows the rain to soak through would be a good solution?

—SUE SAUNDERS, DANFORTH, ONT.

Roger Cook replies: Well, the way I see it, you already have a green

QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Using a router table, I want to make a baseboard that will fit in between the door casing and the baseboard.

Q Our 1930 house has beautiful original moldings, except in the dining room where they were removed by the previous owner. I can't find anything to match them. Any suggestions?

—APRIL HUNNELL, CHATHAM, N.J.

Ernest Hall, millworker and owner, Hall Historical, replies: When none of the offerings at the home center or the lumberyard measures up, then it's time to go the custom route. A millwork shop can make special "knives" and turn out

an exact duplicate of your existing moldings. The problem is, you have to pay sawp fees, which means the lower-cost price isn't necessarily and may not be cost-effective for a small order like yours.

The way to avoid these charges is to make your own profiles using a table saw, band saw, and router. On the next page, you can see all the steps I follow in order to copy a short piece of baseboard cap. The process isn't difficult, as long as you're familiar with and respectful of these powerful tools.

Costs: \$40 for a bending bit, \$100 for a router, most of which is wearing so I bought cuts. **Difficulty:** Difficult. Care must be taken when working with power tools.

STEP-BY-STEP

Match moldings

1. Trace the profile

Pry out one piece of the molding you want to copy. If it's curved with a joint, sit it down to be traced. The edges of wood slightly larger than you need, undercut down the table saw to make the help fit and fasten. After making the cut, turn the profile of the original onto the end of this block. If the wood will be stained, choose a block of the same species as the original.



4. Cut the sending block

The rough-cut profile needs to be sent to the shop to have the block cut and router marks. You can have a custom-made or make a custom-made sending block. Trace the profile onto the end of the short piece of wood that will be used to make the profile. Use a hand saw to cut along the profile line.

2. Rough out the shape

Part the end of the block next to the blade with the router table. Adjust the blade height to fit the profile. Mark that spot and set the fence to the cut. It will hit the work. After making the cut, turn the saw off and adjust the blade height to a different spot on the profile. Move the fence slightly and cut again. Repeat until the profile is roughed out.



5. Sand

Once it's roughed out, the rough molding and the block fit together. Trim the block until they mate up. Sand the top of the block with double-sided tape and smooth out the rough molding. Finish the top with a fine sandpaper.

3. Rout the bead

For certain details, like this bead, it's better and more accurate to shape the profile on a router table than to use a table saw. The critical part is using the router table's fence and the bed's height. Test feed the end of the block into the spinning blade and make adjustments until the bead looks as evenly as the right spot. Then rout the end's molding.



6. Check the match

Actually, you'll be checking your progress against the original piece of wood just to make sure your cuts are accurate. By this point, if you're done with your work without stop, make the joint line. Your new molding will blend seamlessly with the old.

driveway—you just want it to be low maintenance. Here are three options to consider.

Permeable pavers. This is what most people think of when discussing green driveways. Made of masonry or plastic, they are laid over a thick base of crushed stone and have gaps and holes that allow water to soak through and exfiltrate them in some cases, the gaps and holes are filled with sand so that grass can be planted in them, as shown at right. They look good and work well but are expensive to install.

Finning strips. By pouring concrete or asphalt paving in two steps, 14 to 18 inches wide and about 1/4 inch apart to create, you'll spend 30 to 40 percent less than if you paved the whole driveway. Fill the area between the strips with crushed stone to encourage drainage and resist erosion. Strips work best on a straight driveway.

Swales. The best green solution is to dig a trench along the high side of the driveway

Make it about 12 inches wide at the bottom, 18 inches at the top, and 6 to 12 inches deep, then line it with fine stone or porous concrete squares, which prevent the sides from eroding. A swale should lead the water to a low point where it can then slowly percolate back into the ground.

Q SEALING GRANITE

Does granite really have to be sealed? All the sealers I saw at the tile store contained petroleum distillates and smelled like a gas station during application. Now I'm reluctant to put them on my late-bloomer granite because I'm not sure they'll be safe.

—JANE FACHS, SAN FRANCISCO

Kevin O'Connor replies: As a general rule, the right sealer will improve the stain resistance of most granite. According to Best



A driveway covered with permeable pavers, like this green-friendly system from Invisible Drainways, allows water to soak back into the soil instead of running off.

Seals, executive director of the National Tile Contractors' Association, "Sealing granite is usually a good idea. On kitchen countertops, it's highly recommended." Just be sure that it's used as food-safe.

The contractor Mark Jensen says the best sealer for granite and marble are the so-called penetrating sealers, or "seepers," which soak into stone without affecting its look or changing the way that "hugest" sealer smells. The best ingredients are solvent-based—they contain

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these products that allow them to be used so conservatively. Once the solvents evaporate, the resin left in the stone can't harm you. But if you'd rather not be exposed to VOCs while applying it, go with a water-based sealer, such as *Seal-Max* (sealmax.com) or *Stone Tech Sealer* (stonetech.com), which are low in volatile compounds.

The *Old House* general contractor Ben Silva made the granite countertops in his kitchen about every other year. "It's so easy to apply [granite sealer], making part of any maintenance routine," he says. "But sealer doesn't make granite use-proof; you'll still need to wipe up spills as soon as you can." In other words, a sealer can't block a stain—it just gives you an extra window of time to take care of any spills before they stain.

According to Fred Plauton, author of *Stone: A Survival Guide for Stone, Tile, and Concrete*, the best way to tell when it's time to re-seal a countertop is to put a few drops of water on it and see if it soaks. If the water soaks into the stone within 10 minutes, you know it's time for another dose.

Harris also says that sealers need a chance to cure—a couple of hours at room temperature—before you put anything back on the counter.

WHAT PRODUCT WHEN

Closed-cell spray foam vs. open-cell spray foam

We are considering the use of spray-foam insulation in the walls of our new addition, but we're confused about which type to use. Can you clarify the difference between open-cell foam and closed-cell foam, and where you would use one instead of the other?

—DORCAS MARIE TROY PA

Troy Silva replies: All spray-foam insulation contains the same basic materials: a sticky polyurethane resin that reacts with moisture in the air, and a blowing agent, a gas that forces bubbles and makes the resin expand. An open-cell insulation creates the bubbles you believe this material handles. An closed-cell insulation, on the other hand, creates a rigid, closed-cell structure, filled with a low-conductivity gas. As a result, open-cell foam has the consistency of a light, fluffy angel-food cake, with an R-value of 3.5 to 4 per inch. Closed-cell foam is hard and dense, with an R-value of 6 to 7 per inch.



OPEN-CELL

CLOSED-CELL

PROS

- Good option to reduce the carbon footprint
- R value increases steadily over time
- Flexible: moves with wood framing
- Effective sound barrier

CONS

- Does not strengthen walls
- Absorbs water, not suitable for basement walls
- May require a vapor barrier depending on climate

PROS

- Strengthens framing
- Does not absorb water
- Blocks moisture: walls may not need separate vapor barrier

CONS

- R value degrades slightly over first two years in first blowing
- Insect holes from cats
- More expensive than open cell

WHAT IS IT?

D-1 SPRING ROLLER

The roller/squeegee helps push around—and remove!—loosely packed D-1 beetle grout off leveling concrete or epoxy floors, but they do not interfere with the curing or leveling process.

\$84, counter.com



For more information on this product, please go to the product page on the website. The information on this website is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice. The information on this website is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice. The information on this website is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional advice.

READER TOOL TEST

6-inch random-orbit sanders

When a woodworker needs to prep a door for staining or level out a girder, a big 6-inch random-orbit sander is going to finish the job fast. The best ones combine adjustable power for fast removal of hard work, comfort for extended use, and decent dust extraction to keep the work clean. We had woodworking instructor Mario Rodriguez put these to the test. Here's what he discovered. —SA, VIA ICA

Notes: All sanders tested had 120- and 360-grit sandpaper on a dual-sided paper and dust bag. Photo based on manufacturer's approved online distribution.

METABO SXE 450 TURBOTEC

Price: \$247; metabo.us

Test results: Left a fast clean, fine sand finish with grits on all three woods. 50 dB. Dust collection: excellent.

My two cents: This is the quietest sander, with more aggressive vibration. It has two sanding modes: one with a 10-inch orbit pattern for rough work and another with 16-inch orbits for finish sanding. A turbo option boosts sanding speed even higher. **Tool status:** 3 pounds, variable speeds, 13,300 max rpm, 8-foot cord.

see more sanders

Visit askthisoldhouse.com to find more information on all the products we test here (or just click).



RIDGID R2611

Price: \$325; ridgid.com

Test results: Gentle on poplar, even speeds with 80-grit, but 180-grit left deep marks on the plywood. 100 dB. Dust collection: poor.

My two cents: This is a sturdy built tool that did not vibrate excessively. It would be fine for everyday sanding, but fine finishing is not its strength. **Tool status:** 6 pounds, variable speeds, 10,000 max rpm, 10-foot cord.

Notes: All sanders tested had 120- and 360-grit sandpaper on a dual-sided paper and dust bag. Photo based on manufacturer's approved online distribution.



MARIO RODRIGUEZ is an instructor at the Philadelphia Furniture Workshop. He has nearly 30 years' experience as a professional woodworker.

★★★★★ FESTO 150/3 EQ

Price: \$285; festo-usa.com

Test results: Perfect finish on all three woods. 85 dB. Dust collection: excellent.

My two cents: This sander has a collection bag, ergonomic grip. I think it's best suited for fine finish work. **Tool status:** 4 pounds, variable speeds, 10,500 max rpm, 8-foot belt-and-hook cord.



★★★★★ BOSCH 3727DEVS

Price: \$195; bosch-usa.com

Test results: Good finish on all three woods. 95 dB. Dust collection: very good.

My two cents: It delivers very good scratch-free results with little vibration. Only complaint: The dust collector is difficult to remove. **Tool status:** 2 pounds, variable speeds, 12,000 max rpm, 8-foot cord.



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save**thisoldhouse**

A Queen Anne, and a big barn, for a bargain!

Price: \$54,900
Location: Greene, N.Y.
Dealer: Richard Thomas
Tel.: 607-360-2813

The history: Time has failed to sweep away this sturdy 3900 Quaker-Arte, originally home to Lorain D. Fritsch, alcohol brooms manufacturer. Right behind the house is the two-story barn where Fritsch once stored his brooms; asborghart plant used to make brooms in pre-Seattle America. After Fritsch passed away, in 1941, the house became home to the Friedlander family who remained there for about 50 years. Mary, the family matriarch, was a beloved teacher at the local high school and regarded by many residents here as the town's premier intellectual.

Why save it? The three-bedroom house has lofty ceilings, a built-in pantry, and slits around doors, windows, and moldings. It's located near the center of a charming village that boasts antique shops, a top-notch library, and several restaurants. And that two-story barn would make an outcrop of a guesthouse or workshop, wouldn't it?

What it needs: Plaster patching, updated plumbing, and a new roof to start. While the house has just one small bathroom, another could be carved out of a large sitting area in the second-floor landing. An unfinished attic could also serve as a home office. Oh, and there are still a couple of windows left in the old beam—just in case you need something to close up with. —KATHY HANCOCK

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1. The gables of the 1,500-square-foot house retain their fish-scale shingles; the red-tile vinyl sided 2. An iron side porch door with double lights separates the living room and the porch 3. The built-in pantry has original brass hardware 4. The 1000-lb. stainless-steel built-in oven 5. The 1000-lb. stainless-steel built-in oven 6. The 1000-lb. stainless-steel built-in oven

Got a house? If you have an old house that should be saved, send us a note with its The Old House, Ltd. West 50th Street, New York, NY 10019 or southoftheatlantic@aol.com.



got a house to save?

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Oils and oil heat can be expensive, noisy and smoggy. And installing conventional air duct systems in old houses often requires coming up stairs and walls at great expense and disruption. There's an easier, more efficient way.

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Like conventional HVAC systems, the Fujitsu Halcyon system locates the compressor and condenser outside the house. But Halcyon systems eliminate the need for a basement- or attic-located evaporator unit and bulky ductwork by using thin copper tubing that pumps refrigerant directly to inconspicuous wall-mounted blowers inside. Even more remarkable, this same unit works in reverse in winter, absorbing heat from the outside air and moving it indoors to heat your home. The result? Efficient cooling and heating for view-crowded, whole-house comfort in most climates.

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- ☒ You want to reduce elegance and manage room temperature
- ☒ \$20,000 quoted for central air give you sticker shock
- ☒ You'd like to lower your utility bill up to 50%
- ☒ You want a system that switches from heating to cooling automatically
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